

**WDARM
LOCAL WORKING
GROUP**

Date: Friday April 15, 2005

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Tooele Extension Office

Planning/scoping
meeting

Members Present: Brock Benson (NRCS), Sarah Lupis (USU EXT), Jason Robinson (USU), Paul Carl (USU), Boyd White (Volunteer/Chair), Kim Asmus (UDWR), Lance Stavis (USFS), Renae Bragonje (USFS), Linden Greenhalgh (Tooele EXT), Alan Mitchell (Landowner/Co-Chair), Elizabeth Mitchell (Landowner).

Information Presented

SOP and MOU were presented to the group and reviewed.

Group discussed Utah's shrub-steppe conservation framework. Sarah informed the group about the UPCD Regional and State Teams and the role of this group in the overall framework. Brock emphasized that the group needs to send a chair or co-chair to the regional team meeting. Sarah also informed the group that funding is available to reimburse landowners for their time if they elect to attend UPCD Regional Team Meetings.

Lek Counts: There are 2 leks in Vernon and 2 in Ibapah. Boyd, Alan, Tom, and Jason have been checking these areas for the past month or so. The Little Valley and MacIntyre leks have been visited almost every week in March and April (one week was skipped because of weather). Jason was also able to identify an area in the Ben Moore Flats where birds are strutting. That area will be monitored to determine if it is in fact a new lek site. Jason and Alan believe that the males may move around in that area. The only consistent site seems to be south of the coral. At that site, there was a high count of 21 males. Little Valley had a high count of 15. McIntyre had a high count of 90 males. Jason and Boyd feel that weather may be affecting numbers. They plan to continue monitoring leks and counting until the end of April. They have visited Ibapah this and last week. The birds there seem to flush more readily than in other areas. The high count there was 20 males.

Trapping: Going REALLY well!! Collared 11 females and 2 males in Vernon! Special thanks to Paul, Boyd, and Alan's son for all their hours and efforts! Thanks also to some members of Jason's family for their help!

Crickets: APHIS may spray areas for Mormon crickets. If spraying does occur, they will notify

Jason about a week in advance so that he can monitor insects and sage-grouse in the sprayed and unsprayed areas. Jason will be comparing insect abundance in brood and non-brood locations. He would like to coordinate efforts with the USGS. Some crickets have been spotted above Grantsville at about 5,000-6,000 feet. Linden has been out with Clint looking at crickets in the County. Clint will have more information in a few days to make recommendations.

Funding: Alan and Elizabeth received a letter from the NRCS stating that they were approved for EQIP money! They have yet to sign a contract but will do so soon. A USFS archeologist will be asked to do the clearance on the Mitchell's property. She will be able to sign off on the clearance for the NRCS because she is a recognized archeologist.

Jason and Boyd reported on several other species observed in the area. They've seen a curlew, burrowing owls nearby, and also a potential PYRA site. They will send that information on to Kim.

Discussion Highlights

Group name was discussed. Group discussed the benefits of including "sage-grouse" or "sensitive species" in the name. Group decided that the name should defiantly include West Desert rather than Tooele/Vernon.

With regards to crickets, Alan asked how Jason will identify "unsprayed" areas given the striped pattern of spraying. Alan pointed out that historically unsprayed areas (like Vernon Reservoir) will naturally have higher cricket densities. We are not sure how sage-grouse use Mormon crickets. Jason hopes to make observations of chicks eating insects to see if they use crickets, ants, beetles, or a combination of the three. USGS is establishing 300-meter transects, installing pit-fall traps along them. They will leave the trap open for 2-3 days before spraying, and then repeat the process for 2-3 days immediately following the spraying. According to Greg Abbot, the chemical only affects cricket/locust/grasshopper type insects because it inhibits the insects from developing an exoskeleton. The USGS also has study sites in other areas and are also looking at the effects of spraying on spotted frogs.

NRCS Range Scientist will likely be announced in 2-4 weeks from now.

BLM is proposing a fuels reduction near Lookout Pass (350 acres). They are removing pinyon and juniper for fire management, sage-grouse, etc. Lindon's contact person was Kyle Hansen (801) 977-4376. Kyle is in the SLC field office. The treatment is scheduled to begin in about a month.

Actions Taken

Group decided to amend regular meeting time to the third Friday of every other month. **The NEXT MEETING will be held on Friday, June 17th, 1:00 PM in the Tooele Extension**

Office.

Boyd White was elected Chair and Alan Mitchell was elected Co-chair.

Boyd and Alan signed the non-discrimination form.

Follow-up Needed

Chair (Boyd or Alan) to go to next UPCD regional team meeting in Provo April 26th 10:00 AM.

Sarah to email SOP and MOU (and Statewide Strategic Management Plan) to group with new name (West Desert). Group to finalize both at next meeting.

Group to comment on SOP and MOU and return comments to Sarah before next meeting (no later than June 1st). State and Federal agencies to identify signatories to the MOU and review terms listed on signature page with those individuals. If changes need to be made to the signature page, please include in comments due June 1st.

Sarah/Todd to amend contact list and binder cover to reflect name changes.

Jason to send GPS points of potential PYRA locations and locations of other sensitive species to Kim.

Linden to send cricket information to Sarah/Todd who will send it to the Group.

Group to follow-up on name. Sarah to check Strategic Management Plan for guidance on this.